



The President's Daily Brief

~~17 July 1972~~

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~~Top Secret~~^{25X1}

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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VIETNAM

South Vietnamese forces pressuring Communist units near Quang Tri City are encountering stiff resistance and both sides have suffered heavy casualties. According to intercepted messages, the Communists defending the city and surrounding areas intend to continue fighting and to use all the firepower they can muster to repel the south's troops. Even antiaircraft artillery units have been ordered to use their guns against South Vietnamese tanks and infantry.

Farther south in Thua Thien Province, Fire Support Bases King, Birmingham, and Bastogne were attacked on 14 July, with only light losses to the South Vietnamese defenders. The city of Hue was also hit by artillery fire for the second day in a row.

Elsewhere in South Vietnam, there was only sporadic fighting, with most of the enemy attacks occurring in the Mekong Delta.

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According to radio direction finding, the 312th Division's 165th Regiment--noted moving south through the North Vietnamese Panhandle in recent days--has arrived in Quang Tri Province in South Vietnam. There are also signs that the rest of the 312th

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Division may be preparing to shift south. The division's headquarters and its 141st Regiment recently communicated with the military high command in Hanoi, an occurrence that frequently has meant the unit has been assigned a new mission and is preparing to move. A cessation in communications between the division and the senior military authority for southern North Vietnam has also been noted. This suggests that the 312th and its subordinate 141st Regiment may be leaving the country, possibly for northern South Vietnam.

The 312th Division returned home from northern Laos in early May, and has spent the past two months refitting in the area of Vinh. The division has had enough time to integrate replacements but insufficient time completely to rejuvenate all of its units for combat.

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According to an intercepted North Vietnamese message of 13 July, at least eight infiltration groups are moving south through the North Vietnamese Panhandle. No strengths were noted in the message, but if the groups are normal in size, (about 500 men each), this movement could total several thousand men. All eight of the groups are heading for northern South Vietnam. Many of these personnel no doubt represent replacements for Communist units that have been taking heavy casualties in the fighting around Quang Tri City.

NOTES

USSR - North Vietnam: The Soviet official responsible for overseeing foreign aid programs, Deputy Premier Novikov, met with the North Vietnamese Ambassador in Moscow on 13 July. It was the first publicly announced meeting between the two since mid-May, and it could presage the announcement of a new supplemental aid accord. The Chinese and the North Vietnamese signed such an agreement on 29 June. The Soviets may have wanted to discuss with the North Vietnamese some new approaches for dealing with the Chinese about the transshipment of Soviet supplies.

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India - Pakistan: The Pakistani Army is reported to have begun withdrawing artillery and heavy equipment from the Wagah sector on the northeast portion of its border with India, and troops emplaced there are no longer camouflaged. The US Consulate General in Lahore believes this indicates the Pakistanis are beginning their withdrawal from Indian territory--as called for in the Simla Agreement--as well as pulling back troops within Pakistan from the border area. Wagah is on the main road from India to the important city of Lahore.

Libya: The Libyan government crisis has been resolved with Colonel Qadhafi still in control

[REDACTED] This crisis revolved around the formation of a responsible cabinet in Libya that conformed with those in Egypt and Syria, its sister confederation states. Qadhafi intended to abolish the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) in the process, thus arousing the fears of RCC members not included in the new political structure. A compromise plan was accepted, with the RCC being retained as a major policymaking body, between the new cabinet (as its executive) headed by Jallud and the new President, who will be Qadhafi. These changes may be announced by today, if the remaining minor problems are ironed out.

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